



STATE SENATOR

KEN SIKKEMA

CAPITOL FAX

Friday, February 28, 2003

MICHIGAN'S BUDGET: THE SKY IS NOT FALLING

Contrary to much of the talk in and around Lansing, Michigan's financial sky is not falling. Michigan has faced tougher times before and pulled through, even without raising taxes. In 1981-82, the general fund deficit was nearly twice as large as either shortfall faced by Governor John Engler in 1990-91 or Governor Jennifer Granholm in 2003-04. And the recent cuts to the Michigan School Aid fund were very modest when compared to the 45 percent growth in education funding that occurred in the 1990s. This year's \$128 million shortfall in the School Aid Fund represents only 1 percent of the total \$12.8 billion SAF budget. Next year's projected \$350 million deficit represents only 3 percent of the total budget. Balancing the budget will be difficult, but it is not insurmountable. The Republican initiatives of the 1990s have created greater economic diversity in our state and will form the foundation of our resurgence. Republicans will continue to lead reforms in our state, focusing on funding what is necessary and essential, without raising taxes.

SENATE REPUBLICANS KICK-OFF READING MONTH

Legislators, educators and students alike will come together next month to celebrate National Reading Awareness Month. Members of the Senate Republican Caucus are scheduled to visit local elementary schools to read to students and stress the importance that reading bears on young minds. In addition, Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema and members of the Senate Republican Caucus have scheduled a "Green-Eggs and Ham Breakfast" to kick-off reading month. The event will take place Tuesday, March 4 at 8:45 a.m. outside the Senate Chambers and, in honor of Dr. Seuss' birthday, will include a catered green eggs and ham breakfast buffet.

POLICE IMPERSONATION BILLS HEADED TO HOUSE

Individuals perpetrating crimes of impersonating a peace officer, police officer or coroner would face felony charges under legislation passed by the Senate this week. Senate Bill 117 would amend the Code of Criminal Procedure to include the sentencing guidelines of impersonating a peace officer to be a felony offense. Senate Bill 118 would amend the Michigan Penal Code to update the prohibition against impersonating a police officer or coroner. The legislation would create a felony offense for impersonating a peace officer to commit or attempt to commit a crime. Senate Bills 117 and 118 are headed to the House of Representatives for consideration.

FRIDAY FAX GOES ELECTRONIC IN APRIL

Starting April 4, the Friday Fax will only be available via e-mail. The change comes as Senator Sikkema implements cost-cutting measures in his office to help eliminate Michigan's budget deficit. The same information available in the Friday Fax will continue to be available through the Capitol Report, which is issued via e-mail every Thursday. Anyone wishing to be added to the Capitol Report may send their e-mail addresses to: OfcKSikkema@senate.michigan.gov.

The *Capitol Fax* by Senator Ken Sikkema is designed to provide residents and organizations with a timely update of legislative activity in Lansing. If you have any questions, do not wish to receive this fax, or would like to receive this via e-mail, please contact Senator Sikkema's office.

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